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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Intermountain
Region

Ogden, Utah



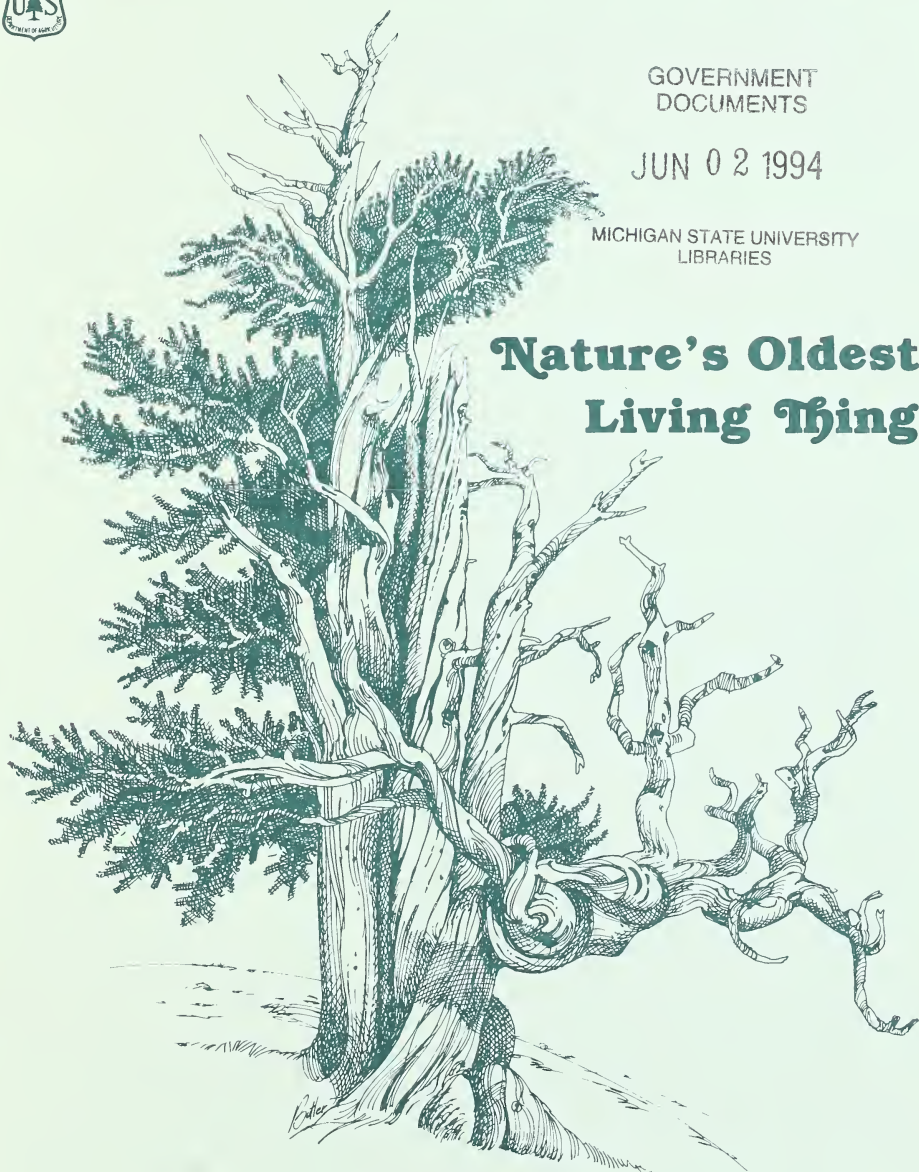
The BRISTLECONE PINE

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**Nature's Oldest
Living Thing**



The Bristlecone Pine (*Pinus aristata*) is an amazing tree.

Although these trees were known to reach extreme ages, it is only recently that their great age and natural beauty have awakened a new interest in scientists and nature-lovers.

Most authorities consider the Bristlecone Pine to be the oldest known living thing in the world. Several specimens have been found which approach 5000 years in age. A Bristlecone Pine six feet tall may contain as many as 900 annual growth rings.

Found on the high, barren, wind-swept slopes of the South-western states, these twisted and gnarled veterans have been sculptured by time, weather, and the other elements into dramatic shapes and draped in picturesque colors. The key to their great age and beauty partially lies in the ability of the species to adjust to the adverse and continually changing environmental conditions. They possess the remarkable ability to grow in favorable years and almost stop growth during adverse years. Many of them contain considerable amounts of dead wood with only a thin line of inner bark to sustain the living portion of the tree.

The Bristlecone Pine can be identified by its location, form, foliage, and cones. It is a short, bushy tree, often multi-stemmed and malformed. Its most common associates are limber pine, spruce, and fir. The needles are deep green and occur in clusters of five. They are 1" to 1-1/2" in length, stout, and slightly curved. The needles completely surround the twigs and small branches giving them an appearance of a long bushy tail. Because of this the Bristlecone is often confused with its close cousin, the Foxtail Pine (*Pinus balfouriana*), which is found only in California and southern Oregon.

The cones are 3" to 3-1/2" in length and are a deep chocolate brown at maturity. The cone scales are stout, thick, and armed with a long, fragile, curved (bristle-like) prickle from which the Bristlecone Pine receives its common name. Because of Bristlecones' limited range, unique age, scientific and aesthetic value, the U.S. Forest Service has a noncutting, nonremoval policy for the trees.



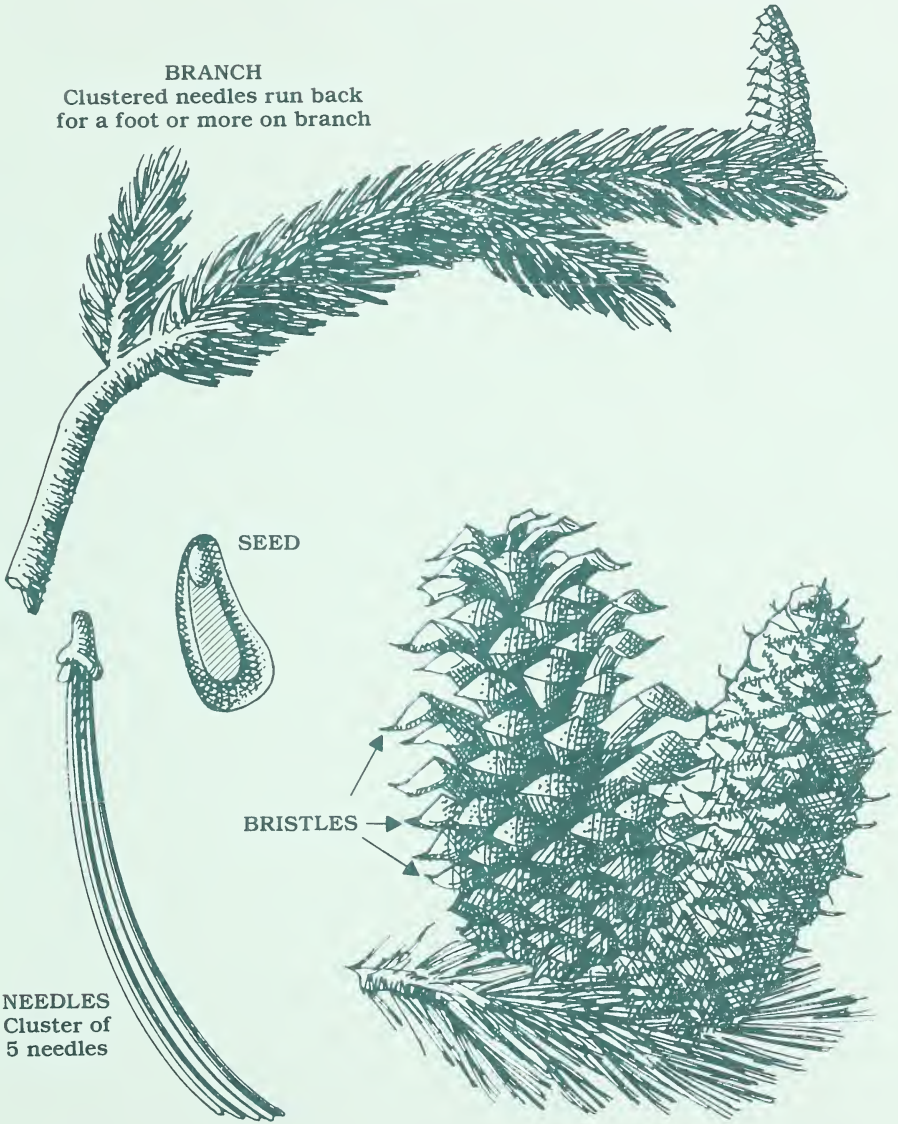
CONES
Grow on tip of
branch only

BRANCH
Clustered needles run back
for a foot or more on branch

SEED

BRISTLES

NEEDLES
Cluster of
5 needles





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Bristlecone Pine stands are found at high elevations in three National Forests in the Intermountain Region--the Dixie in southcentral Utah, the Humboldt in eastern Nevada, and the Toiyabe in southern Nevada.

Bristlecone Pines are widely distributed on the Dixie National Forest. Two major stands have been located on the Cedar City Ranger District. Other stands are found in association with ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and Engelmann spruce throughout the Forest.

On the Humboldt National Forest, large continuous stands of Bristlecone Pine are found growing on the Snake Range in eastern Nevada, with the majority in the Wheeler Peak Scenic Area. A signed, interpretive trail there winds through some of the oldest Bristlecone Pines discovered.

Extensive stands of Bristlecone Pine have been found on the Las Vegas Ranger District of the Toiyabe National Forest, in southern Nevada. Here young trees are at lower elevations while older trees inhabit the higher areas.

You are encouraged to visit and photograph these living links with the past. Please do not climb on, carve, or deface the trees.

For further information, contact the Forest Supervisor at one of the following addresses:

Forest Supervisor
Dixie National Forest
82 North 100 East
P.O. Box 580
Cedar City, Utah 84721-0580

Forest Supervisor
Humboldt National Forest
976 Mountain City Highway
Elko, Nevada 89801

Forest Supervisor
Toiyabe National Forest
1200 Franklin Way
Sparks, Nevada 89431

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